

## (March 2, 2009) Lipinski: "LONG-SOUGHT SouthWest Service Weekend Trains NOW A REALITY"

Congressman's effort to establish weekend service pays off

[OAK LAWN, IL] Today, Congressman Dan Lipinski (IL-03) was joined by transit operators, numerous elected officials, and railroad representatives to announce the success of the congressman's exhaustive effort to bring weekend train service to Metra's SouthWest Service Line. The highly desired weekend service will begin on March 21, 2009. As Chicagoland's only member of the powerful House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Lipinski initiated and coordinated the negotiations that made this expanded service a reality.

Representative Lipinski was joined by Phil Pagano, Executive Director of Metra; Carole Doris, Metra Board Chairman; Judy Baar Topinka, Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Board Member; Mayor Gene Siegel of Chicago Ridge; Mayor Ed Guzzi of Worth; and many other local officials. The SouthWest Service runs from Chicago to Manhattan with stops in communities such as Ashburn, Wrightwood, Oak Lawn, Chicago Ridge, Worth, Palos Heights, and Palos Park.

"Today we mark a historic moment in the history of the SouthWest Service Line and all the communities along the line," said Rep. Lipinski. "Countless residents of these communities as well as elected officials from Manhattan to Wrightwood had come to me about the need for weekend service. Many viewed weekend trains on SouthWest Service as only a dream. But - as planned and promised - that dream is coming true in less than three weeks.

"Whether someone is going to work on the weekend or a family is going out for a day of fun, this will be very beneficial, especially in these tough economic times," continued Lipinski. "This will also help communities along the line to bring people to destinations in their towns, like the Oak Lawn Children's Museum.

"I was proud bring together the relevant stakeholders, including Metra and the freight railroads, to sit down and hammer

out the details of making this expanded service happen," stated Rep. Lipinski. "Without their willingness to come to the table and work to find solutions, weekend service simply would not have been possible. And, while this initial expanded service has started as demonstration project to test ridership, I have no doubt that if you run it, they will come."

In July, Congressman Lipinski convened a high-level meeting that brought together Metra, RTA, local elected officials, and the freight railroads to look for options and solutions to bring weekend trains to the SouthWest Service Line. As a result of that initial meeting, Metra agreed to develop a proposal for a demonstration project to run weekend trains. In October, Lipinski joined Metra and RTA to announce a \$680,000 grant to fund this initial weekend train service. Starting March 21, 2009, Metra will begin to implement weekend service with three inbound and three outbound Saturday trains. Weekend train schedules for SouthWest Service will be made available at [www.metrarail.com](http://www.metrarail.com).

"In 2006 we expanded service on the Southwest Service Line" said Metra Chairman Carole Doris. "While that expansion did not include weekend service, we have heard from many riders and communities that weekend service is very much in demand. We are grateful to Congressman Lipinski for securing funding to make this project happen."

"The RTA was pleased to help fund the new Saturday Metra SouthWest Service through the Innovation, Coordination and Enhancement Program, and we thank Congressman Lipinski for his strong leadership for this initiative and his support for mass transit in general," stated RTA Board Member Judy Baar Topinka. "The service will help meet rapidly increasing transit demands in the suburbs while offering a more environmentally friendly travel alternative."

"Weekend service is going to be great for Chicago Ridge and the entire region, and I want to thank Congressman Lipinski for all his work on this issue," said Mayor Gene Siegel of Chicago Ridge.

"After hearing many others talk about getting weekend trains, Dan Lipinski went out and got it done. Congressman Lipinski continues to be a leader fighting and winning for our communities" added Mayor Ed Guzdziol of Worth.

As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Congressman Lipinski is tasked with working to formulate national transportation policy and has been a tireless advocate for expanding local access to mass transit. This year, the Committee intends to reauthorize a \$286.5 billion highway and transit funding bill, which provides billions of dollars to Illinois and local transit agencies like Metra, CTA, and Pace for road and transit funding.